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RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6868  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 2183  
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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/19/07

Index:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule

MSDF anti-terror role:

- 4) Japan coordinating new UNSC anti-terror resolution on OEF and ISAF activities that would underscore MSDF refueling operations in Indian Ocean
- 5) Government aims to use new UNSC resolution on Afghan activities as pressure on DPJ to reconsider stance opposing MSDF anti-terror role
- 6) Government calculating that new UNSC resolution will soften DPJ resistance to anti-terror law
- 7) DPJ President Ozawa reiterates categorical opposition to MSDF refueling activities in Indian Ocean
- 8) Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano, Defense Minister Komura see introduction of new anti-terror bill this Diet session
- 9) UK ambassador in meeting with defense minister seeks continuation of MSDF services in Indian Ocean
- 10) Former LDP Vice President Yamasaki optimistic that new UNSC resolution will pave way for extension of MSDF refueling services in Indian Ocean

Security affairs:

- 11) Former LDP Vice President Yamasaki sees North Korea's nuclear testing as a good wakeup call for Japan
- 12) Government to beef up anti-hacker policy measures to prevent

leaks from defense contractors

DPJ in action:

13) Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) to introduce bill to Diet that would withdraw SDF troops from Iraq

14) DPJ head Ozawa to visit China with an entourage of 1000 traveling in three chartered jets

15) New DPJ strategy envisions Diet dissolution in the spring, followed by a snap election

16) Ozawa rejects LDP presidential candidate Fukuda's call for inter-party talks on Diet dissolution

17) Ozawa unhappy with Fukuda's campaign pledge of "independence and association," which he says was originally his slogan

18) Criticism of government's crisis management system that has ignored fact that prime minister has been hospitalized and incapacitated

19) Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano unhappy with media claims of his role in a "coup d'etat" of sorts against Prime Minister Abe that usurped his authority

20) Education advisory panel report omits controversial proposal of making "morality" a subject for study in schools

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

DPJ eyes possible dissolution of Lower House next spring, charts a new strategy to deal with new LDP president

TOKYO 00004339 002 OF 012

Mainichi:

Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency to ease employment regulations on former employees of pharmaceutical companies

Yomiuri:

UN to express gratitude to countries, including Japan, participating in Operation Enduring Freedom for their Maritime Interception Operation

Nikkei:

Abu Dhabi's government-affiliated investment firm IPIC to become the head of shareholders of Cosmo Oil

Sankei:

Japan proposes to China to compensate for half the money already invested by Beijing for exploration of gas fields in East China Sea

Tokyo Shimbun:

Central Education Council decides not to put moral education in a list of subjects

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

(1) Politics-and-money scandals: Did the LDP fail to learn lessons?

(2) Don't leave violations unattended

Mainichi:

(1) LDP presidential race: New vision for reform should be made clear

(2) Ryoko Tani wins gold medal in judo world championship, brings her dream to realization even after having a child

Yomiuri:

(1) LDP presidential election: Lack of policy debate

(2) New bar exam: Professors of law schools should not write exam questions

Nikkei:

(1) Japan should attend upcoming UNGA

(2) True challenge for Microsoft

Sankei:

- (1) LDP presidential race and abduction issue: Fukuda should come up with specific ideas
- (2) Rating firms needs rigorous disciplines to remove mistrust

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Heavy penalty on drunk driving necessary to put an end to tragedy
- (2) Electric Appliance Recycling Law: What should be done to eliminate illegal disposal?

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 18

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

10:39

Met Cabinet Affairs Office Director-General Chishiro in his hospital

TOKYO 00004339 003 OF 012

room at Keio University Hospital in Shinanomachi. Signed cabinet meeting documents.

- 4) Government coordinating new antiterrorism UN resolution for MSDF refueling operation to be authorized

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
September 19, 2007

In a drive to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, a controversial issue in the extraordinary Diet session, the Japanese government started coordination with countries concerned yesterday to have the UN Security Council adopt a new resolution that would endorse the dispatch of the MSDF. Behind this development is the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) opposition to an extension of the mission, on the grounds that "the operation is not directly authorized by the UN." A new resolution, if adopted, will have a major impact on the fate of the MSDF mission in the current Diet session.

The UNSC plans to adopt a resolution later this month to extend the operation of the UN International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The countries concerned are making preparation to insert in the resolution words stressing the necessity of maritime intercept operations (MIO) by the multinational naval force in the Indian Ocean to prevent moves of terrorists and weapons.

In order to adopt a resolution, the approval of at least the five permanent member nations - the US, Britain, France, China, and Russia - is necessary. But a senior Foreign Ministry official said: "With no objection coming from the permanent members, prospects are in sight for the resolution to be adopted."

As the basis for refueling and water-supply by the MSDF based on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, the government has cited UNSC Resolution 1368, which recognizes the terrorist attacks on the US as a threat to the peace and safety of the international community, and other resolutions, reiterating that there is no need for a new resolution.

President Ichiro Ozawa of the DPJ, which now controls the House of Councillors, interprets that Resolution 1368 just allows the US to use its right of self-defense. He has expressed his opposition to the antiterrorism operation in Afghanistan, claiming: "The operation is a war waged by the US and has not been recognized as proper by a UNSC resolution."

- 5) Gov't explores grounds for MSDF mission through new UNSC resolution

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
September 19, 2007

The United Nations Security Council is expected to adopt another resolution extending the international community's current deployment of an international security assistance force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the Japanese government has been working on the United States and other countries in order to stress that the new UNSC resolution should aim at underscoring that Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force has high marks from the international community for its activities in the Indian Ocean to restore civil order in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto)

TOKYO 00004339 004 OF 012

President Ozawa and other DPJ leaders remain opposed to the idea of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, under which the MSDF has been operating in the Indian Ocean. Ozawa has noted that the MSDF's refueling mission there is not based on a UN resolution. The government wants to continue the MSDF's refueling mission with its appeal to the international community, urging the DPJ to change its policy.

Japan has been taking part in maritime interdiction operations (MIO) to play a role for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). In connection with extending ISAF activities, the new UNSC resolution, which the United Nations is expected to adopt today, is to express its gratitude for the ongoing operation. In addition, the new resolution is also expected to refer to MIO for the first time.

This time, the UNSC may recognize the importance of OEF and MIO in its resolution. If that is the case, the Japanese government expects that the MSDF's refueling mission under the antiterror law will become even more legitimate in the international community. "We can expect to widen public understanding on the MSDF's refueling activities that are appreciated by the United Nations," a senior Foreign Ministry official said.

The government and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party also expect the DPJ to change its mind. "If the greater part of the international community's members asks Japan to extend the antiterror law, I think the DPJ should change its stubborn attitude," said an LDP lawmaker with the experience of cabinet portfolio.

"If it's difficult for the United Nations to adopt a new resolution, then the UNSC or the UN secretary general should release a statement to say clearly that the MSDF has been working there at the United Nations' request," former LDP Vice President Taku Yamasaki said yesterday in Tokyo. With this, Yamasaki stressed that Japan should work on the United Nations in order to obtain the DPJ's understanding.

6) A new UNSC resolution might deprive Ozawa of basis for opposition to extension of MSDF refueling mission

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

(Commentary)

If the United Nations Security Council adopts a new resolution that would authorize the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa may lose the basis for his opposition to the government's plan to extend the mission. In the party, some are potential supporters of the government plan. Given that more people show understanding of an extension of the mission in various opinion polls, the main opposition party might be pressed to make a bitter decision, depending on future developments.

In a press conference yesterday, Ozawa renewed his opposition to an extension of the MSDF mission even under a new administration, saying: "We clearly pledged to oppose the government's plan in our manifesto for the earlier House of Councillors election. It will never happen that we will change our policy (depending on trends in public opinion)."

TOKYO 00004339 005 OF 012

Ozawa also said: "The major question is whether the dispatch of SDF troops overseas infringes on the Constitution. UN operations do not come under the category of the use of force based on the invoking of a sovereign right, so they do not violate Article 9." Ozawa's basic view is that the government should invoke the right to self-defense only in an emergency that would directly affect the safety of Japan and that the dispatch of SDF troops overseas should be based on a UN resolution.

The problem is whether the UN would recognize in its new resolution the MSDF refueling operation as an operation of "direct involvement."

In a meeting with United States Ambassador to Japan Schieffer in August, Ozawa also cited this reason for his opposition to an extension of the MSDF mission: "Although the mission might be included in the general comprehensive argument (authorized by the UN), there is no resolution directly authorized by the UNSC."

Depending on the contents of a new resolution, Ozawa might make a policy switch to agree to extend the mission, but he stated in the press conference yesterday:

"I have not said that we will do everything if there is a resolution. The government of the time should decide on whether Japan should participate or not, in which area Japan should participate, and at what scale Japan should participate."

7) DPJ's Ozawa reiterates opposition to refueling mission

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged)  
September 19, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) President Ozawa, meeting the press yesterday, indicated that the DPJ would oppose the government's plan to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. "We clearly made a public pledge in our manifesto for the House of Councillors election (against continuing the MSDF's refueling mission)," Ozawa said. "There will be no change (in the DPJ's policy)," he also said.

In addition, Ozawa also called for an early dissolution of the House of Representatives. "The cabinet continues to be without purpose," Ozawa said, "and Prime Minister Abe has done an unprecedented act." He added, "We think the House of Representatives should be dissolved as soon as possible." Furthermore, Ozawa said: "The LDP-led government is full of contradictions. In time, they will have no choice but to dissolve the Diet."

8) Yosano, Komura eye presentation of new antiterrorism legislation in current Diet session

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano in a press conference yesterday expressed his personal desire that new legislation allowing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean would be presented to and approved by the Diet in the current session. He said: "The interval before next year's regular Diet session will be too long. A decision must be made from a viewpoint

TOKYO 00004339 006 OF 012

of whether it is sincere enough or can obtain international support."

Defense Minister Masahiko Komura also told the press yesterday: "To me, presenting (new legislation) to next year's regular Diet session has not been an option. The cabinet must determine what's best by lending an ear to all voices."

In the meantime, former LDP Vice President Taku Yamasaki delivered a speech in Tokyo yesterday morning. In it, Yamasaki urged the government to lobby the United Nations to win its seal of approval,

saying: "The government should obtain a new UN resolution. Even a statement by the UN Security Council president or a comment by the UN secretary general will do."

9) UK envoy also asks Japan to continue MSDF's refueling mission

TOKYO (Page 5) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Defense Minister Masahiko Komura met with British Ambassador to Japan Fry at the Defense Ministry yesterday afternoon. In the meeting, Fry asked Komura to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean, noting that the MSDF's refueling mission there is an important constituent element of the war on terror. He added: "We want Japan to work on. That's in the interests of Japan." Komura stressed, "Based on various opinions, the cabinet will consider what to do."

Komura expressed his gratitude to Fry for the British military's security of Ground Self-Defense Force members deployed in the southern Iraqi city of Samawah.

10) Yamasaki calls for new UN resolution for continuation of refueling mission

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Taku Yamasaki, a former Liberal Democratic Party vice president and the chair of the ruling bloc Antiterrorism Law project team, delivered a speech in Tokyo yesterday. In the speech, Yamasaki urged the government to seek a new UN resolution on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. Yamasaki indicated that a new UN resolution would help persuade the Democratic Party of Japan about extending the refueling mission, while pointing out the need to discuss specifics with the DPJ in advance.

He also criticized the Abe administration's hard-line policy toward North Korea, saying: "The nuclear issue is moving rapidly toward a settlement between North Korea and countries other than Japan. Japan must catch up with them at a stroke." Assuming that former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda will become the new prime minister, Yamasaki also said: "I think (diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea) will have been normalized by around this time next year. The new administration is tasked to achieve that."

11) Yamasaki: It was good that North Korea conducted a nuclear test

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

TOKYO 00004339 007 OF 012

Taku Yamasaki, a former Liberal Democratic Party vice president, in delivering a speech in Tokyo yesterday touched on North Korea's nuclear test last October. He said: "I think it was good that the North conducted the test. There had been all sorts of speculations about whether that country possessed nuclear weapons. The test made it clear that (it has nuclear weapons). That's what I mean."

Yamasaki added: "After that, both the United States and North Korea had to shift their policies." He apparently intended to emphasize that the United States after the North's nuclear test shifted its policy emphasis from pressure to dialogue in dealing with the North, and that the six-party talks have moved forward as a result.

12) Report to government on computer hacking damage suffered by defense-related companies to be mandated: Measures to prevent intelligence leaks under consideration

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

The government plans to take drastic measures to prevent technology and trade secrets possessed by companies and research centers from

being leaked. As part of such measures, it will mandate that defense-related companies report to the government in the event their computer system suffered a hacking attack. It will also establish criminal charges for the act of stealing defense secrets. Another plan is to close the courtroom for some trials in order to correct the present situation in which companies whose important trade secrets were stolen do not file a lawsuit in fear of further information leakage. In view of the reality that information leak routes have become diversified due to the development of the Internet and the increased mobilization of human resources, the government aims at preventing illegal leakage of information, which poses a threat to security and corporate competitiveness.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will set up a Study Group on Appropriate Control of Technology, Information, Etc., for the purpose of submitting a bill amending the Illegal Competition Prevention Law to the regular Diet session in 2009. Leading companies will take part in the group. The Defense Ministry and the National Policy Agency will also participate as observers.

The government will mandate that defense-related companies file a report if they suffer suspicious information collecting activities, such as hacking and industrial espionage. It will then release the outline of targeted information to make a wake-up call to other companies. Companies that failed to abide by this rule will be suspended from taking part in government procurement for a certain set period. Criminal charges, including prison term, will be imposed on those who collected defense intelligence through hacking activities.

Under the existing law, even if universities' basic research technology or companies' trade secrets are stolen, those responsible for the crime can only be charged with theft or misappropriation. The government will regard such information as property and make it possible to charge persons responsible for the theft of such, depending on the contents.

13) DPJ to present Iraq withdrawal bill

TOKYO 00004339 008 OF 012

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ) decided yesterday to submit to the House of Councillors in the ongoing Diet session a bill that would withdraw the Air Self-Defense Force from Iraq, a senior DPJ lawmaker revealed.

The bill, once submitted, is expected to clear the opposition-controlled Upper House and be sent to the House of Representatives.

The DPJ has consistently opposed the SDF mission in Iraq, charging that the government has followed the United States based on incorrect intelligence about the existence of weapons of mass destruction and other matters. The DPJ has decided to submit the legislation with the aim of playing up its stance of opposing the dispatch of the SDF for overseas missions.

The party is also opposed to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.

In order to win public support, the largest opposition party has decided to increase the frequency of Diet deliberation on the question of sending the SDF overseas.

14) 1,000 persons to accompany Ozawa on trip to China, boarding three chartered airplanes

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

It has been decided that Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa will visit China on Dec. 6-10. A total of 1,000 persons, including 50 DPJ lawmakers and supporters, will accompany

Ozawa on his China trip. The large delegation is expected to go to China on three chartered airplanes. Ozawa and other senior party members will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao and other Chinese leaders, aiming to play up their own channels of communication to Beijing, as well as diplomatic caliber, with an eye on a political change.

DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka revealed yesterday the outline of Ozawa's trip to China. The purpose of his China visit is to combine the exchange program between the DPJ and the Chinese Communist Party to commemorate the 35th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties between the two countries, with the "Chojyo program," which is a grass-roots exchange by Diet members and private-sector persons from the two countries, which Ozawa created in 1989 under the Takeshita government.

The DPJ and the Chinese Communist Party agreed to set up a consultative organ last July when Ozawa visited China. They held the first meeting in January when a Chinese delegation came to Japan. Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wang Yi, who will soon leave Japan, asked Ozawa on Sept. 6 to visit China in December.

15) DPJ eyes a possible dissolution of Lower House next spring, charts a new strategy to deal with a new LDP president

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)  
September 19, 2007

TOKYO 00004339 009 OF 012

Watching carefully the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential campaign, the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has begun envisioning a possible dissolution of the Lower House next March, when deliberations on the budget bill for fiscal 2008 will reach a critical stage. Behind this move is the DPJ's judgment that with Prime Minister Abe's resignation as prime minister, a major battle between the ruling and opposition blocs in the Diet is more likely to shift from the current extraordinary session to next year's ordinary session. By taking advantage of the "reversal of the positions in the Upper House between the ruling and opposition blocs," the DPJ intends to bring to light controversial points in the budget bill, vote down budget-related bills, which cannot be automatically enacted, and drive the ruling bloc into dissolving the Lower House. In line with this strategy, the DPJ is devoting itself to preparations to pursue the government on the pension issue and its wasteful spending of taxpayers' money.

To drive the ruling bloc into dissolving the Lower House in budget deliberations

"The only way for me to follow would be to read the situation at the time, taking into account legislation that will affect the people's livelihood. If both sides can share the awareness of issues, I think it is possible to hold talks with the opposition bloc. The right to dissolve the Lower House is granted the prime minister, but the present situation is not the one for the prime minister to exercise that right." LDP presidential candidate Yasuo Fukuda thus referred to a "dissolution of the Lower House by agreement" on Sept. 16. Because he used the term "people's livelihood," speculation has spread that dissolution of the Lower House is likely to occur next spring, when the national budget will be debated in the Diet.

The question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which was at one point viewed as a major issue in the current Diet session, has now been left up in the air due to Prime Minister Abe's announcement of his intention to resign. Fukuda has not mentioned yet anything about new legislation to replace that law. Defense Minister Komura, too, said at a press briefing yesterday, "There is the saying 'slow and sure wins the race.' I think it is wise to make a fresh start during the ordinary session of the Diet," implying putting on hold the extension issue.

Reading these developments in the ruling bloc, the DPJ has begun eyeing an ordinary Diet session as the main battlefield. The party intends to focus its energies on budget deliberations.



At a press conference yesterday, Ozawa said, "I hope the Lower House will be dissolved as quickly as possible. If the LDP likewise wants to do so, it can do so. However, this does not mean 'dissolution by agreement.'" According to an aide to Ozawa, Ozawa's strategy is to create a situation by voting down budget-related bills and driving the government and the LDP into a corner so that the LDP will be forced to dissolve the Lower House.

16) DPJ President Ozawa rejects possibility of Lower House dissolution through discussion

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, who is now running in

TOKYO 00004339 010 OF 012

the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidential race, has indicated the possibility that if he becomes prime minister, he would dissolve the House of Representatives through discussion with the opposition camp after FY2008 budget is approved. Referring to Fukuda's indication in a press conference, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa revealed yesterday that his party had no such an idea, saying:

"I hope the Lower House will be dissolved as early as possible. An early dissolution of the Lower House is possible if the LDP wishes to do so. I don't think the Lower House should be dissolved through discussion."

He also added: "I don't understand his idea that he would dissolve the Lower House to pass the budget."

With this regard, DPJ Upper House Secretary General Kenji Hirata made a comment in a press briefing yesterday:

"The prime minister has the right to dissolve the Lower House. So there is no need for the prime minister to consult with the opposition. If the opposition camp submits a no-confidence motion against the cabinet, that would be a different case. We have no intention of holding a discussion with the prime minister for the purpose of dissolving the Lower House."

17) Ozawa criticizes Fukuda's "independence and association" pledge as his own words, expressing displeasure

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa made cynical remarks about former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda setting forth "independence and association (kyousei)" in his campaign pledge for the Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election. Ozawa said in a press conference yesterday: "Please ask him why he has cited words that Ichiro Ozawa has used over the past 20 years."

Ozawa further said: "Since (the LDP) holds political power, it should make its own policies, rather than copying others," adding: "Whatever he says, lip service alone is no good. Nobody will trust him unless he carries out specific measures."

In reference to the fact that Fukuda mistakenly said "coexistence (kyouzon)" twice when he meant "association" in a joint-campaign speech, Ozawa made fun of him, remarking: "It is funny that he forgot the word. His slogan has slipped his mind."

(TN: Both words can be used for "coexistence.")

18) Experts criticize the government's crisis management system since no acting prime minister has been appointed

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

Some experts are now criticizing the government for not appointing an acting prime minister despite the hospitalization of Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe. The government has taken a position that the present situation does not meet the requirement to appoint an acting prime minister and that there has been no problem in carrying out

TOKYO 00004339 011 OF 012

prime ministerial tasks. However the government's crisis management system will likely come under fire.

Abe was hospitalized on Sept. 13 in a Tokyo hospital after being diagnosed with functional gastrointestinal disorder. Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano, at a press conference yesterday, revealed

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the latest diagnostic outcome of Abe's condition that there is no change in the situation that Abe needs sufficient time to recover his health, that he is still on intravenous drips since he has not made any progress toward recovery, and that he has had no problem in making decisions.

The hospital side's view is that Abe should stay in the hospital until this weekend. If he is hospitalized until Sept. 25 when the Abe cabinet is expected to resign en masse, the absence of prime minister, an unusual situation, would last for 13 days.

At the press briefing, Yosano stated that there was no need to appoint acting prime minister since the case this time did not meet the requirement set under the Cabinet Law. He stressed that there was no crisis management problem. However, Takushoku University Prof. Satoshi Morimoto made a critical comment: "I don't think the government can make appropriate decisions without the prime minister." Tokyo University Prof. Takashi Mikuriya also said: "It is natural to appoint the chief cabinet secretary as acting prime minister."

19) Yosano displeased about coup rumor, saying, "It is heartless propaganda spread by heartless persons"

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
September 19, 2007

There is a rumor going around that Secretary General Taro Aso and Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano engineered a "coup d'etat" that so cornered Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, he decided to announce his resignation. Yosano during a press briefing yesterday afternoon rebutted the rumor, showing his displeasure, "I have neither taken any action that infringed on my duty of supporting the prime minister nor overstepped my duty as chief cabinet secretary."

Bearing in mind that lawmakers who support former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda in the upcoming Liberal Democratic Party

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presidential election are presumably responsible for spreading the coup rumor, Yosano noted, "It is lamentable that heartless persons spread heartless propaganda."

20) Proposal for teaching moral values in schools postponed: Central Education Council decides not to include moral education in school curriculum

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top Play) (Excerpts)  
September 19, 2007

The Central Education Council is now revising school curriculum guidelines. The panel yesterday decided not to make moral values a school subject. The government's Education Revitalization Council in its second report had proposed upgrading teaching moral values to an official school subject as moral education with the aim of improving students' awareness of social norms. However, the prevalent view in the panel had been cautious about making teaching moral values an official school subject. The panel decision indicates that it has

TOKYO 00004339 012 OF 012

distanced itself from the education revitalization policy since

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced his plans to step down.

Schools usually use screened textbooks and students get a grade for each subject. However, moral values being taught in elementary and middle schools are not included in school curriculum. Though a set of proposals made by the Education Revitalization Council did not include a proposal for adopting a point-based performance evaluation system, the package incorporates the lives of great people in Japan and the world and Japanese classics as contents of moral education textbooks subject to screening, based on the assumption that such education will be adopted in the school curriculum.

The Central Education Council has decided that screening school textbooks, meaning the government has a say on the specifics of textbooks taught in schools, and giving grades do not sit well with the idea of moral education. It has decided on a policy of substantively improving students' morals without insisting on making such education an official school subject or incorporating it in school curriculum as moral education. An expert panel will likely confirm its policy of putting on hold the proposals for making moral education a school subject, introducing a license system for special teachers, using screened subjects and giving grades to students.

SCHIEFFER